

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 189 071

SP 016 272

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TITLE Concerns of Teachers About Implementing Individualized Instruction in the Physical Education Setting.
INSTITUTION Texas Univ., Austin. Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Jan 80
CONTRACT G007801892
NOTE 30p.; For related document see SP 016 271.
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Agents; Educational Change; *Educational Innovation; Inservice Teacher Education; *Mainstreaming; *Physical Education; *Program Implementation; Self Esteem; Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Morale; *Teacher Response

ABSTRACT

Teacher attitudes toward adopting individualized physical education programs for handicapped children were measured by the Stages-of-Concern questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed as a diagnostic tool for identifying personal reactions to an innovation. These reactions range from mere awareness of the innovation, through personal concerns about its impact and ramifications, to acceptance and experienced use. In this study teachers were tested before and after a seven week training period on physical education for the handicapped. The results indicated that implementing innovative programs can be facilitated by trainers focusing on individual teachers' needs and concerns. (JD)

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ED189071

Concerns of Teachers About Implementing
Individualized Instruction in the
Physical Education Setting

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January, 1980

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Abstract

Teacher concerns about individualized physical education were measured by the Stages of Concern (SoC) questionnaire developed at The University of Texas Research and Development Center. Data were collected immediately before and just following a replicable, seven-week, client-centered, field-based inservice training program involving 15 physical education teachers. A case study approach was used to report group and selected individual concerns profiles. The results of this study indicated that while change is a difficult and time-consuming process, it can be facilitated by trainers focusing on individual teacher's needs and concerns.

Concerns of Teachers About
Implementing Individualized Instruction
in the Physical Education Setting

The passage of P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, has had a profound effect on all educational programming, including physical education. According to this law, all handicapped children between the ages of three and 21 must be provided free, appropriate, and public physical education. Also, an individualized educational program (IEP) including physical education, must be written for all special education students. Finally, the law requires that handicapped children be educated with nonhandicapped children whenever possible (least restrictive environment for learning).

The requirements of P.L. 94-142 include broad educational innovations which have great impact on not only special educators but also educators who have handicapped children "mainstreamed" into their regular setting. The process of implementing an innovation is difficult.

The work reported here has been conducted with the support of the Bureau of Education for Handicapped Contract No. G00-7801-892. The opinions expressed herein, however, are those of the author, and no endorsement by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped is implied.

since change is often met with consternation, indignation, or even shock. Still others within educational circles view change with hope and look toward new ways to improve student learning.

In implementing an educational innovation, the professional needs of teachers are of high importance. Inservice trainers must be aware of these needs in order to best facilitate change with regard to innovation implementation. The staff of the Procedures for Adopting Educational Innovations Project at The University of Texas Research and Development Center for Teacher Education have proposed a Concerns Based Adoption Model based on the following key assumptions with regard to change:

1. Change is a process, not an event.
2. The individual must be the primary focus of interventions.
3. Change, itself, is a highly personal experience.
4. A full description of the innovation in operation is vital.
5. There are identifiable stages and levels of individuals' experience during change.
6. Inservice training is best facilitated by a client-centered, diagnostic/prescriptive model.
7. The change facilitator must work in adaptive/systematic ways.

(Hall, Note 1)

Questionnaire and interview techniques have been developed at the Research & Development (R&D) Center in order to identify teachers' feelings and

and practices regarding an innovation.

The instruments developed by the Procedures for Adopting Educational Innovations Project staff provide valuable information regarding the ways that teachers of handicapped students adopt change. Also, these diagnostic devices are used to determine the kinds of changes that occur in teachers as a result of interventions by inservice trainers. This study is designed to determine teacher concerns about individualized physical education as measured by the Stage of Concern (SoC) questionnaire. A case study approach is used to report both group and selected individual concern profiles before and after training.

Method

Subjects

The subjects of this study included 15 teachers who conducted physical education classes which included handicapped students. All 15 teachers were from the Region XIII Educational Service Area of Texas. However, in order to better personalize training, they were divided geographically into two clusters of eight and seven teachers each. Each cluster received the same inservice training program.

Instrumentation

Teachers' concerns about the innovation of individualized

instruction in physical education were measured by the 35 item Stage of Concern questionnaire developed at the UT R&D Center. Each item of the questionnaire was scored on a Likert Scale on which respondents indicated their present degree of concern about the topic described in the item. The measure had five items reflecting each Stage of Concern. The questionnaire was completed by the participants at the beginning of the first training session and at the end of the last training session. This questionnaire was designed to determine the relative intensity of seven stages of concern about any innovation. These stages of concern are described in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 here

In a test-retest study involving 132 teachers conducted at the UT R&D Center, stage score correlations ranged from .65 to .86 with four of the seven correlations above .80. Estimates of internal consistency (alpha coefficients) ranged from .64 to .83 with six of the seven coefficients being above .70 (Hall, George, Rutherford, Note 2).

Training Program

The purpose of the inservice program was to train teachers to individualize physical education as specified by P.L. 94-142. The content of the program included:

Table 1

Stages of Concern About the Innovation *

- 6 **REFOCUSING:** The focus is an exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.
- 5 **COLLABORATION:** The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.
- 4 **CONSEQUENCE:** Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on students in his/her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.
- 3 **MANAGEMENT:** Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.
- 2 **PERSONAL:** Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision making and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.
- 1 **INFORMATIONAL:** A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about himself/herself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.
- 0 **AWARENESS:** Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.

*Original concept from Hall, G. E., Wallace, R. C., Jr., & Dossett, W. A. A developmental conceptualization of the adoption process within educational institutions. Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas, 1973.

- overview of P.L. 94-142
- psychomotor assessment
- individual educational programming in physical education
- managing individualized instruction in the least restrictive environment in physical education.

The Region XIII Educational Service Center (Title 4-C funds) and the Physical and Health Education Department at The University of Texas (Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, Personnel Preparation Funds) provided the financing for this training.

The training program consisted of seven formal 2-½ hour group sessions and four individual consultant visits during a seven-week block. The program materials were replicable and were adapted from the I CAN training modules developed at the Field Research Unit in Physical Education for the Handicapped at Michigan State University. The same inservice trainer conducted the formal group sessions in each cluster while three trained consultants conducted the four individual visits. (Each consultant was assigned to five of the teachers.)

Design

A pre-post test design was used to determine the effects of the inservice program on teachers' Stage of Concern about the innovation of individualized instruction in physical education. Stage of Concern for all teachers was measured immediately prior to and immediately after the seven-week training.

Results

Using a percentile table to score the Stage of Concern questionnaire data, a Stage of Concern profile was developed for each teacher. This profile provided a general overview of the teacher's concerns and reflected the relative intensity of each stage of concern about individualizing instruction in physical education. Group Stage of Concern profiles were developed in the same way. These profiles from the pre and post test measures were compared in order to identify changes in teachers' concerns as a possible result of the intervention (seven week inservice training program). A case study approach was used to describe the group profiles and several individual profiles.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model includes a hypothesis that non-users of an innovation will have relatively more intense Stage 0, 1, and 2 concerns, with low intensity Stage 4, 5, and 6 concerns (see Table 1). As an educator begins implementing an innovation, Stage 0, 1, and 2 concerns decrease in intensity while Stage 3 concerns become more intense and Stage 4, 5, and 6 concerns gradually increase in intensity.

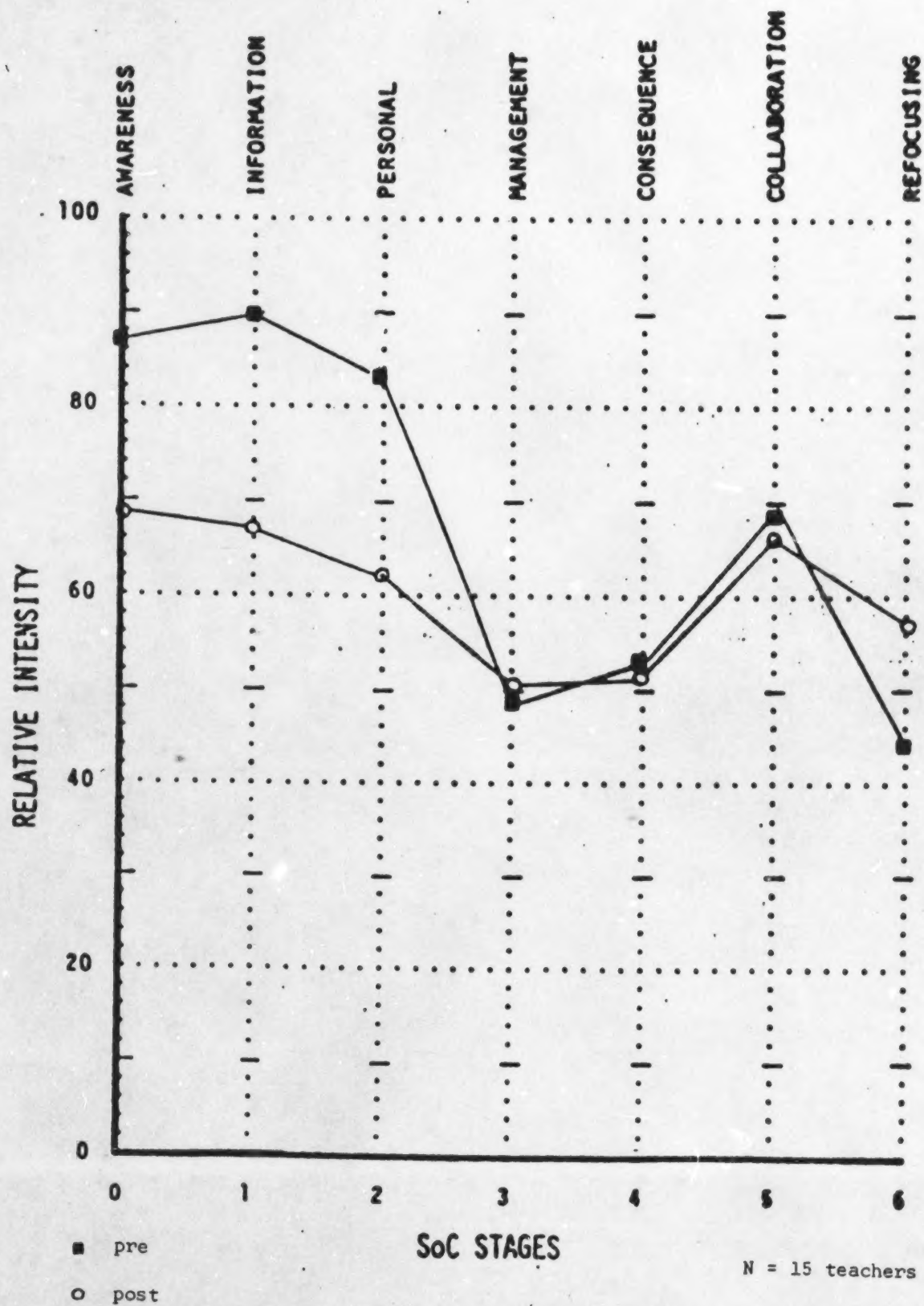
Insert Figure 1 here

Upon examination of Figure 1, the total group concerns profiles before and after the workshop, it became evident that the hypothesized pattern occurred. The intense pre workshop concerns of physical education teachers

Concerns
9

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Total group concerns profiles.



were mainly awareness (Stage 0), information (Stage 1), and personal (Stage 2) while there was a slight peaking of collaboration (Stage 5) concerns. The post workshop data, however, indicated that Stage 0, 1, and 2 concerns decreased substantially at the end of the seven-week training period. At this time, most of the workshop participants had begun initial implementation of individualized instruction.

The lack of substantial change in the intensity of Stages 3, 4, and 5 concerns may indicate that the teachers did not have enough experience with the innovation to change the intensity of these concerns. A planned follow-up measure of concerns may result in increased intensity of Stages 3, 4, and 5 over a longer period of use. The slight increase in Stage 6 concerns from pre to post workshop may be a result of increased knowledge of individualized instruction resulting in teachers beginning to compare this approach with possible alternative approaches.

It is interesting to note that the group collaboration (Stage 5) concerns remained rather high on both the pre and post workshop measure. Individual interviews were conducted in conjunction with the completion of the concerns questionnaire. During these interviews, teachers expressed an urgent need for increased interaction with colleagues about program planning and implementation for handicapped students. During the workshop these concerns were addressed in different ways for each teacher. The collaboration concerns of several teachers decreased after the workshop.

However, some teachers' collaboration (Stage 5) concerns increased at the end of the workshop. Therefore, the post workshop group collaboration concerns remain unchanged.

An examination of selected individual teacher profiles revealed some interesting information which helped the trainers to direct the original training and also to plan follow-up training. These individual profiles also gave an indication of the effectiveness of the training program in changing teacher concerns about the innovation of individualizing instruction. Each of five examples are described in the case studies below.

Teacher A

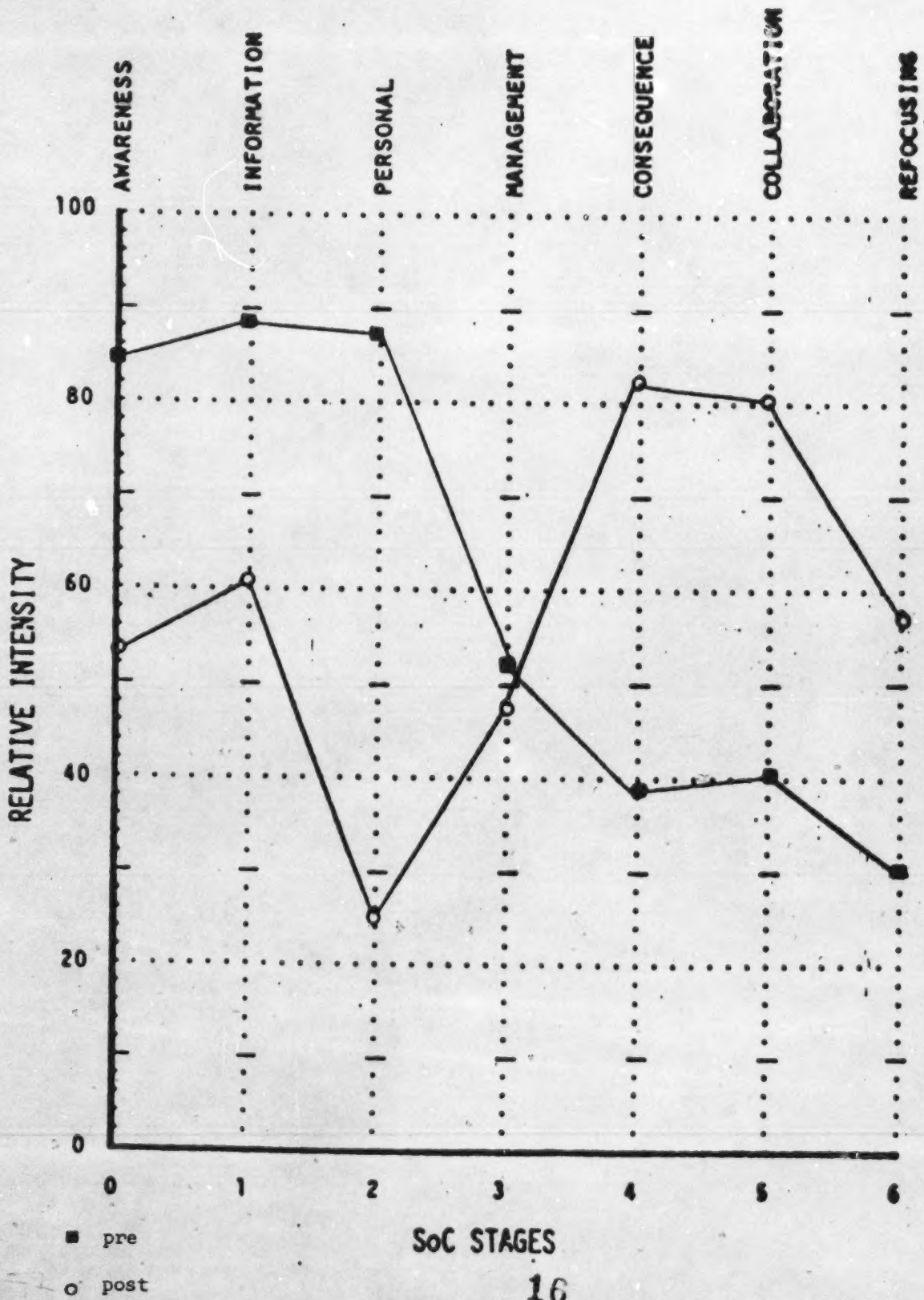
The pre and post workshop profiles of Teacher A (Figure 2) represented a teacher who began the training as a non-user with high Stage 0, 1, and 2 concerns and low Stage 3, 4, 5, and 6 concerns.

Insert Figure 2 here

Most of our teachers had this type of profile at the onset of the training. Therefore, we focused our initial training on building an awareness of the individualized program by giving a broad overview and rationale for the approach. Later, we helped all teachers implement components of the individualized approach in their own settings. While the basic content followed an individualized model, we helped each teacher to adapt it to their own setting.

Figure Caption

Figure 2. Teacher A concerns profiles.



Teacher A completed the workshop as a user of individualized instruction with relatively high Stage 4, 5, and 6 concerns. This is the type of profile we expected from a teacher who benefited positively from a workshop of this sort. There were, however, two interesting occurrences. First, the Stage 3 (management) concerns remained relatively low for both profiles. This was probably indicative of the fact that this was an experienced teacher who was able to organize and coordinate materials and time in a variety of circumstances. This indicated to the trainer that there was little need to address such issues as efficiency, scheduling, and time demands with this particular teacher. The second interesting facet of this profile was the dramatic decrease in personal (Stage 2) concerns from the pre to post measure. During an interview conducted two weeks after the end of the workshop, Teacher A related that the best thing the workshop had done for him was to help him feel more comfortable with and accepting of handicapped children. The change in this personal concern (Stage 2) about handicapped children was evidenced in the teacher's post workshop profile.

Teacher B

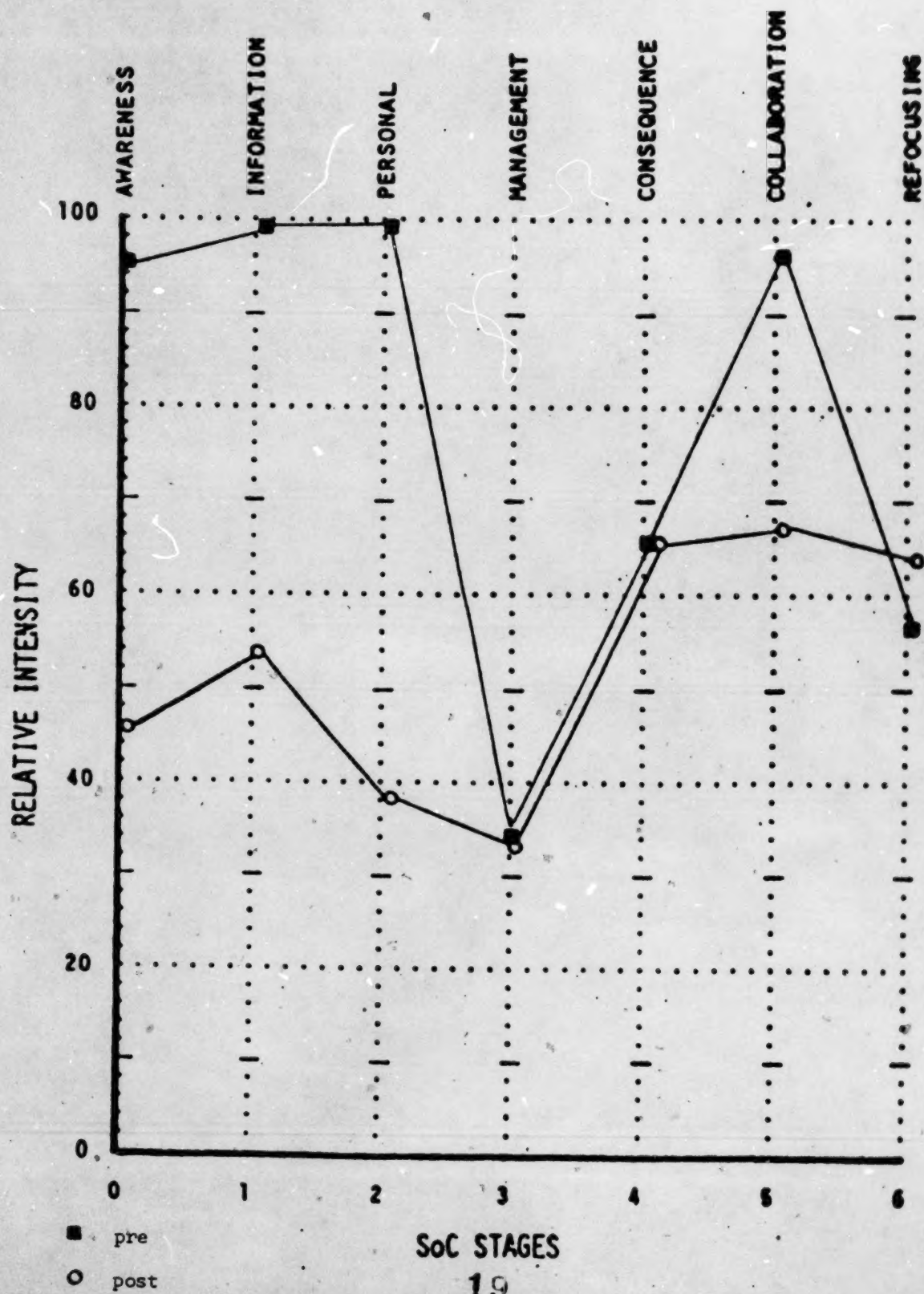
Like Teacher A, Teacher B (Figure 3) completed the training as a user of individualized instruction who began the workshop with high 0, 1, and 2 concerns.

Insert Figure 3 here

Concerns
14

Figure Caption

Figure 3. Teacher B concerns profiles.



Her post workshop profile showed that these same concerns were of less importance after the workshop. While this teacher's Stage 3, 4, and 6 concerns did not change substantially after the workshop, Stage 5 (collaboration) concerns decreased dramatically. This may have been a result of the trainer's focus on activities for coordinating and cooperating with others during the seven week training session. This included such things as setting up a working relationship with special education staff at the teacher's school, along with the other teachers in the workshop cluster.

Teacher C

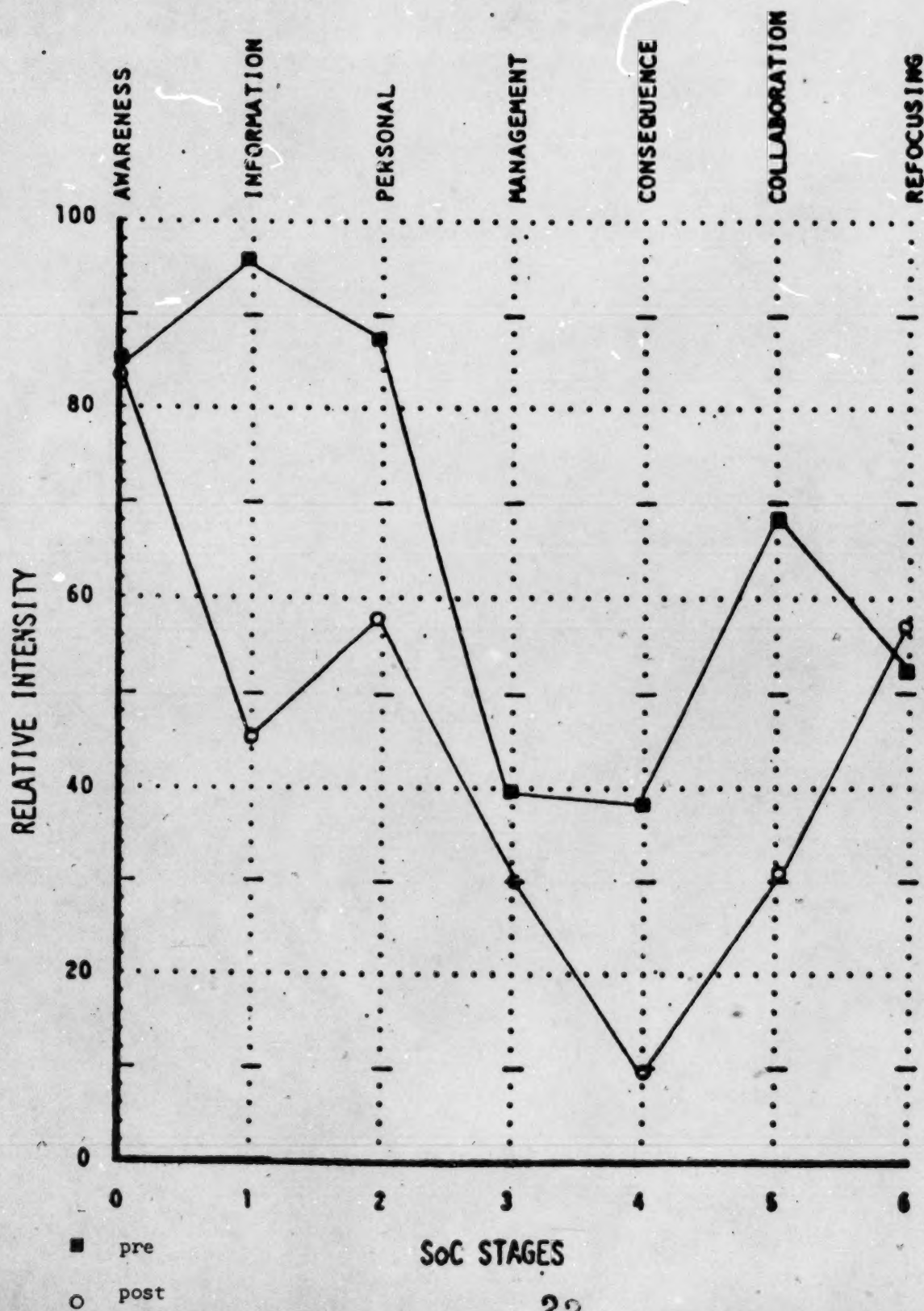
While the pre workshop concerns profile for Teacher C (Figure 4) was very much like the other teachers in the training cluster, his post workshop profile initially was puzzling to the trainers.

▼ Insert Figure 4 here

The relatively high Stage 6 (refocusing) concerns along with the high Stage 0 and 3 concerns indicated resistance to the innovation of individualizing instruction. A follow-up discussion with the teacher defined the situation more clearly. The teacher was informed by his administrator that since he would be acquiring individualized physical education skills in the workshop there would be no future need for the present support services of an itinerant physical educator. Participation in this workshop therefore resulted in negative consequences for the teacher.

Figure Caption

Figure 4. Teacher C concerns profiles.



Although by the time of the follow-up interview the situation was resolved, a profile of this sort made the trainer aware of some potential problem in the teacher's willingness to adopt the innovation.

Teacher D

The pre and post workshop profiles for Teacher D (Figure 5) were similar.

Insert Figure 5 here

This teacher was still a non-user of individualized instruction after the workshop. Her relative levels of concern did not change substantially as a result of the workshop. She indicated a degree of resistance as evidenced by the slight tailing up of Stage 6. Therefore, the training program was not successful in changing the teacher's concerns about individualized instruction. In an interview, this teacher indicated that she had no handicapped students mainstreamed in her classes at this time. Therefore, she saw no reason to individualize instruction. The trainers attempted unsuccessfully to get the teacher to try the approach with her class of regular students.

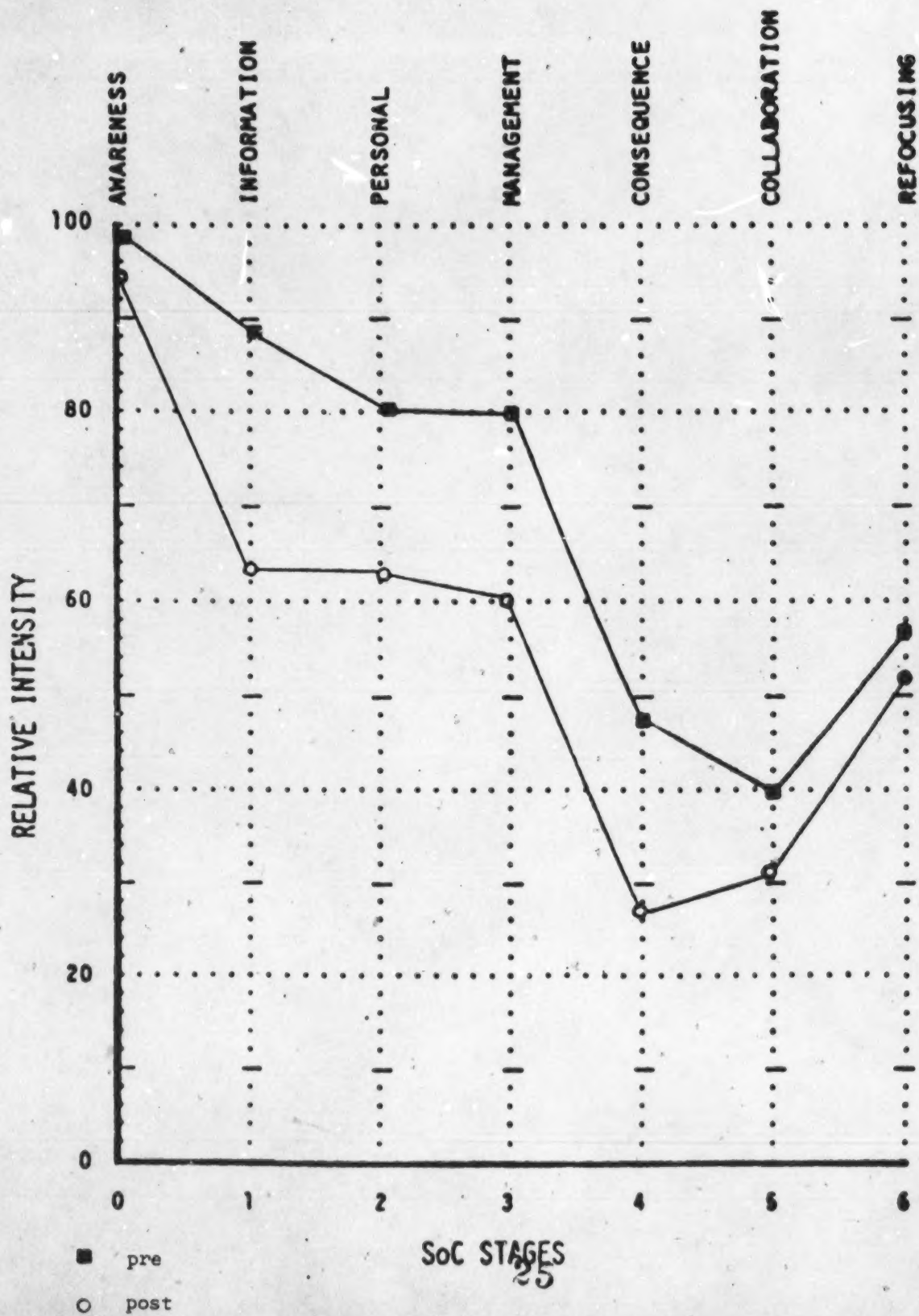
Teacher E

The post workshop profile of Teacher E (Figure 6) also indicated strong resistance in the high Stage 6 (refocusing) concerns with accompanying high Stage 0 (awareness) and low Stage 4 (consequence) concerns.

Concerns
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Figure Caption

Figure 5. Teacher D concerns profiles.



Insert Figure 6 here

An interview revealed that this teacher had extremely heavy coaching and family responsibilities. Also, this was her first year of teaching. These new responsibilities probably made it difficult for her to attempt a new innovation. She left the workshop as a nonuser with high Stage 3 (management) concerns. It would be wise to delay follow-up activities related to individualized instruction until this teacher has time to prioritize the new demands on her and to efficiently manage her time.

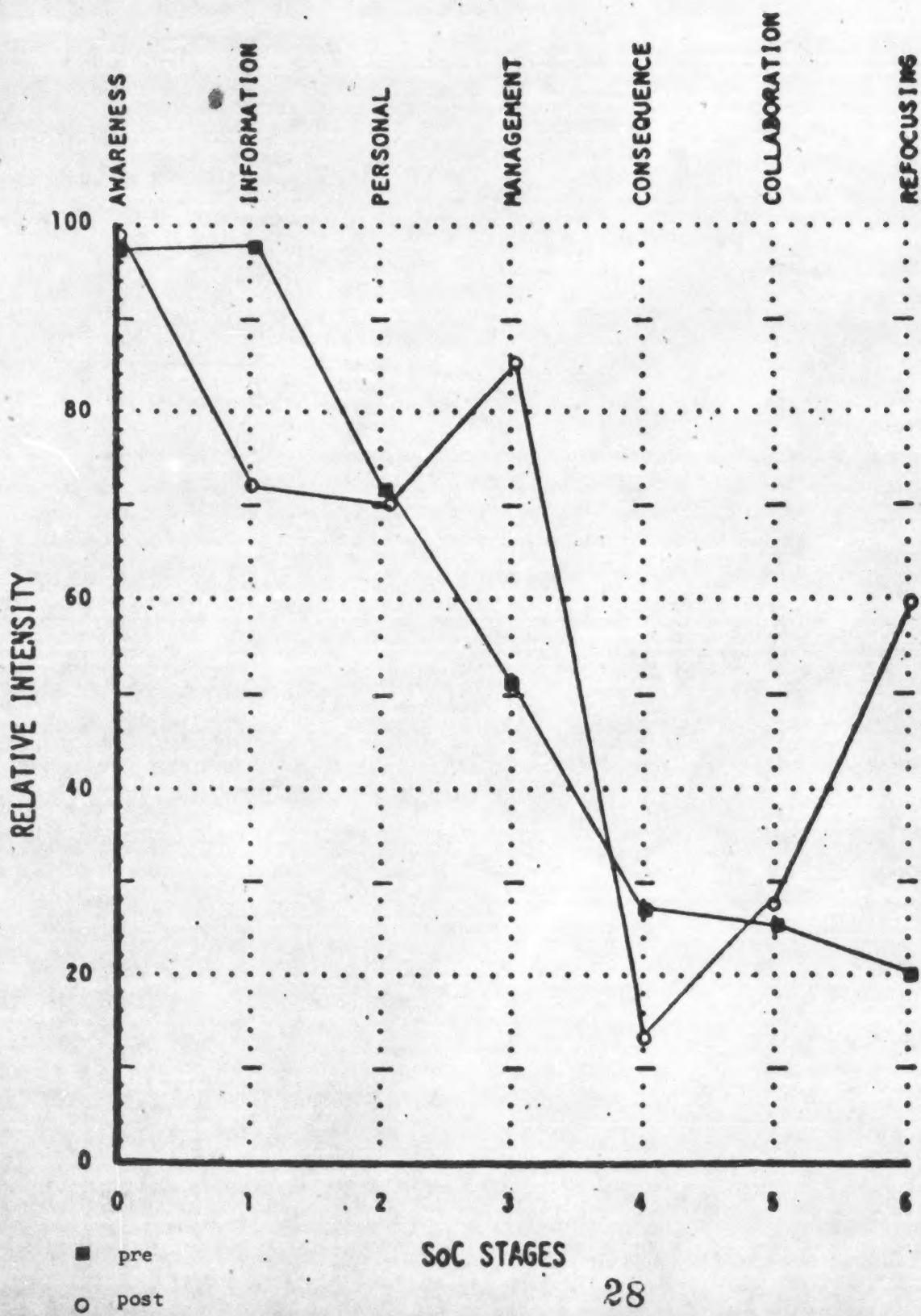
Implications and Discussion

The use of the Stage of Concern (SoC) questionnaire to measure one aspect of innovation adoption provided a great deal of information about the way educators change. The mandate of individualized physical education for all handicapped children requires an adoption model that is based on teacher concerns. In this study, the investigator used individual and group concern profiles to help determine the effectiveness of a seven-week client-centered inservice program designed to train teachers to individualize instruction in the physical education setting. These data also provided the trainers with information to help them personalize the training process for each teacher. The data were presented as group and selected individual case studies. Many implications have been suggested from these case studies. They include:

Concerns
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Figure Caption

Figure 6. Teacher E concerns profiles.



1. Change is a process that takes time. While the seven-week inservice program resulted in a decrease in awareness and informational concerns, it was not of long enough duration to affect consequence and collaboration concerns.
2. Each teacher in the training session adapted to change in a different way. These differences were evidenced in the Stage of Concern profiles and provided information to help the trainer personalize the process of adopting the individualized approach.
3. Attendance at a workshop (even one of the intensity described) does not guarantee that an innovation will be implemented. About 40% of teachers attending this workshop did not adopt the innovation. (These data will be presented in a future publication.)

Change is a difficult process. The implications of P.L. 94-142 involve massive educational innovations including individualized instruction. In order to facilitate the process of lasting and meaningful change with regard to this law, inservice trainers must focus their efforts on individual teachers' needs and concerns.

Reference Notes

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